

Emergency Response Oversight Committee

September 21, 2022 (In-Person / Zoom)
Meeting Minutes

Facilitator: Jessica Verfuss, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Response
Notetaker: Geri Lockwood, Department of Emergency Response

In-Person Attendees: Mike Stitley, TC Department of Emergency Response (TC DOER)
Jessica Verfuss, TC Department of Emergency Response
John Halaychik, TC Department of Emergency Response
Karla Brackett, TC Probation
Dan Cornell, TC Probation
Chris Driscoll, TC Probation
Jason Cawley, NYSP Troop C Zone 3 (SP)
Mikhail Wolchetsky, NYSP Troop C Zone 3
Aaron Forbes, NYSP Troop C HQ
Vince Monticello, City of Ithaca PD
Tim Bangs, Commercial Ambulance Service, Bangs Ambulance
Mark Bell, Volunteer Fire/EMS
Dan Maas, Cornell OEM
Tom Dunn, Ithaca College

Virtual Attendees: Josh Nalley, TC International Airport
Geoff Dunn, TC Department of Emergency Response
Chris Saxon, TC Department of Emergency Response
Justin Vann, TC Department of Emergency Response
Greg Potter, TC Information & Technology Services (IT)
Jenn Olin, TC Sheriff's Office (TCSO)
Henry Granison, TC Legislator
Seth Littlejohn, NYS PD
John Joly, City of Ithaca PD
Josh Tagliavento, Dryden PD
Joe Nelson, Trumansburg PD
Julie Holcomb, City of Ithaca
Mark Conrad, Cornell University (CU)
Samm Swarts, Ithaca College (IC)

Call to Order: Jessica Verfuss called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Changes to Agenda (if necessary): No changes.

- a. Approve 5/25/2022 Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve by John Halaychik, seconded by Tom Dunn, all approved.

Old Business:

- a. Reimagining Public Safety:
 - Ongoing – Mona Smiley is meeting with Departments.
 - Henry announced that it's possible that positions will be added in Tompkins County in the 2023 Budget.
- b. Policy Updates / Approval:
 - Jessica e-mailed the By-Laws and Policies/Agreements for review, and she stated that revisions must be completed by early December and signed/approved by the end of December.

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- c. Policy Updates / Approval - continued:
 - Dan Cornell added that a Policy for the TC Probation Department will be modeled after the TCSO. He'll get with Jessica and Mike Stitley for this. Jessica announced that Probation has been added to the radio system for Probation Officer (PO) safety. John Halaychik added that they are operating on the TCSO channel and wanted law enforcement to be aware that they'll be announcing arriving at and clearing from locations. Dan stated that the PO's wear plain clothes and drive their own vehicles, but they can display their badges, if necessary. Karla Brackett added that they try to wear identifying jackets. Aaron Forbes and Mikhail Wolchetsky understand the need for undercover capabilities but stated it would be helpful if they wore their badges for identification with law enforcement.
 - Since there were no updates on the Policies, Jessica announced that they will become EROC Policies.
- d. Cyber Security – NetMotion:
 - Jessica has worked with Greg Potter and Kim Moore on a grant for this. There will be multi-factor authentication (MFA) coming soon. Due to the thousands of dollars the licenses for the NetMotion Touch will cost, there will also be a limited amount of them available. Jessica requested that law enforcement agencies prepare a list of activations that will be requested. Discussions can take place regarding fire and EMS activations. Mike added that it may be possible for agencies and departments to pay for the additional activations. Some SP units cross County lines, Touch does not have cross system access, as owners have their own, and some Departments have unique needs.

New Business:

- a. PowerDMS:
 - John Halaychik announced that DOER purchased this document management system, initially for Dispatch Operations as one central repository.
 - However, there will be a separate directory for EROC, and all members will be provided login capability in early 2023 after Policies and Agreements are signed. The system will make it more streamlined and easier to manage and look up or change the documents. When searching for something, type in a key word, and the program will return the section(s) of document(s) with that word.
- b. Agreements (to be signed by AHJ):
 - Be sure to send all changes or updates to Jessica before December, so they can be signed by the end of the year.
- c. By-Laws (distributed for review/comment):
 - See Agreements above.
- d. SIREN Messages:
 - Geoff Dunn will provide templates, and when it's determined that a message is warranted, submit the completed message to the Dispatch Supervisor to send the message out, and be sure to include generic details to avoid increased calls to the Dispatch Center. Remember that messages should be followed up with cancel/all clear messages. During the day, Geoff will assist with message distributions.
 - It was suggested that a link could be included for agency websites. DOER messages will eventually be available on their website.
 - Community Partners can be set up to distribute their own messages, and Geoff will be happy to set them up. When messages are distributed by agencies, please notify the Dispatch Center to make them aware. Dan Mass offered to share how CU handles messages.
 - SP's first thoughts are to secure the scene, then gather resources. Notifying the public is not in the forefront, but they understand that messages will be necessary in order to deter traffic from the area/scene.

Additional Agenda Items:

a. Closest Car Policy:

- John Halaychik requested support dispatching the next closest law enforcement officer to situations when EMS is staged and the local law enforcement agency does not have available assets to immediately respond. There was support for the initiative, however, the NYSP requested that their duty sergeant be contacted first before sending their unit. This is for situational awareness and to ensure they are available to respond. IPD Acting Chief Joly spoke in support of the suggestion, as did Under Sheriff Olin, however, the Under Sheriff emphasized that they would support the initiative, but more needs to be done to ensure there is proper messaging to the community. D/Chief Monticello agreed with notifying a supervisor on duty that a request was to be made for the closest car. The Under Sheriff was concerned that this could complicate RPS concepts if not properly communicated to community stakeholders. Specifically, the community needs to recognize that there are times when law enforcement is on scene to support other first responders and that their presence on scene could have been at the requests of EMS or Fire. The Under Sheriff also emphasized that the Sheriff Department has a responsibility to the entire County, so if there is a particular jurisdiction that seems to have law enforcement response issues to EMS calls, that there would need to be more conversation on the topic. The group supported moving forward with next closest car protocol to support staged EMS resources if local law enforcement resources are not available.
- The colleges are confined/defined by statute and need permission by request to assist.
- The main concern is the safety of the medical providers, mainly when drugs, violence, weapons, or mental health/psychiatric calls are involved.
- Justin Vann will meet with law enforcement and EMS agencies for further discussion and decisions.
- John H. added that TC3 had declined to participate.
- A discussion took place regarding the revisiting the document, due to the changes with the Chief in the City, and whether or not the Policy should be an EROC one. It was decided to keep it separate for now, but it will be available in PowerDMS.

b. Flagging Process:

- SP's processes were reviewed recently. They are reviewed every six months at DOER, but there is an issue when there is no response from agencies regarding the flags. The Dispatch Center should be notified by a supervisor of any flag changes between the review periods, but requests to remove flags should be from the initiating agency. Notifications to Chris Saxon by e-mail is acceptable.
- Flag searches for the deceased are searched by name and address, including old/previous addresses.
- Please notify Jessica of interest to join a committee to work with Chris and Eldon Stevens regarding the flagging processes.

c. Towing Policy:

- Can fire departments call for a tow truck if a vehicle is blocking a hydrant, apparatus access, etc.? In the event of a fire or serious traffic accident where immediate medical treatment is necessary, or vehicles that need to be stabilized or moved for safe extraction, it's usually okay, but law enforcement is to be made aware, and potential evidence must not be disturbed. In the City, yes, unless it's a traffic accident, as the crash site is to be preserved for law enforcement. Outside the City is the sole decision of law enforcement. Fatal accident scenes are to be preserved for law enforcement arrival.
- There was further discussion, and it will be added to the next Fire Chief's meeting.
- If there's a need to amend the Policy, proposed language should be available at the next meeting.

Standing Sub-Committee Reports (Members):

d. Law Enforcement (LE):

- Faith Varva, City Chief of Staff, had discussed the City's position/plan on the Community Solutions Division.
- Mike Ellis, from Family & Children Services, had discussed the new County Outreach Worker Program.
- Undersheriff Olin stated that the Sheriff's Clerks pilot program is going well.
- Sergeant Orsaio had provided a demo/summary of IPD's new dashboard.
- They had discussed DOER Policies 300.116, CAD Nature Codes (the impact on future call delineation discussions), and 400.114, Advanced SEND Protocol. Undersheriff Olin will see John H. and TC ITS regarding two call codes to be added in FLEX.

e. Fire and EMS:

- A couple of meetings have been held but were uneventful for EROC.
- Tim Bangs asked if the body removal Contract had been finalized, as law enforcement is still held on scene until Funeral Home personnel or Bangs arrive to remove the body when the Medical Examiner releases them for an unattended death. John H. stated that Brenda Grinnell Crosby, from TC Health Department (TCHD) is near completion of this, but it's not signed off at this time. John is hoping for an update on this soon, and he'll follow up on it.

Standing Sub-Committee Reports (Members) - continued:

f. Dispatch:

- John H. stated that everything had been covered throughout the meeting.

g. Training:

- Jessica announced that staff from Cayuga Medical Center, TCHD, and DOER participated in a virtual tabletop exercise with FEMA. FEMA's 2023 training schedule is available, and some EROC members may be invited to participate in some of them.

h. Information Technology Administration:

- No updates at this time.

Announcements (Personnel, Events, Projects, etc.):

a. BUC:

- No updates at this time.

Adjourn:

- Next meeting scheduled for November 16, 2022, 10:00 a.m., DOER Lee Shurtleff Conference Room, in person and virtual. Jessica will be attending a Conference at that time, so the meeting will be facilitated by Mike Stitley.
- Jessica V. adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.